

# DIY camp classic

*Breaking out of the Busch leagues*

## ON STAGE

David Roche

**E**VEN WITHOUT ITS dyke bloodsuckers, cute chorus boys, silent screen stars, gossip columnist and charlady, you'd be right to suspect a camp classic from the title alone.

Vampire Lesbians Of Sodom, at Tallulah's Cabaret later this month, is certainly camp. It starts in ancient, queer-infested Sodom, then fast-forwards to 1920s Hollywood and '80s Las Vegas — updated Sodoms, after all.

Producer Evan Tsitsias found the script three years ago in an anthology of Charles Busch's plays. "I knew as soon as I read it that I wanted to do it." Busch also wrote Psycho Beach Party; his Tale Of The Allergist's Wife is now on Broadway.

Earlier this year, Tsitsias mounted Don't Tell Mama, his tribute to songwriters Kander and Ebb. The smooth two-act revue used just enough storyline and choreography to enhance the songs.

That show had three impressive performers who are also in Vampire Lesbians: elfin, versatile Suzette Araujo; grand Sally Johns; and youthful song-and-



**I VANNA SUCK YOUR BLOOD.** James Greenwood as vampire-through-the-ages Madeline Astarte.

dance man Mark Allen. Also featured in the new show are handsome US actor Michael Boivert, actor-playwright Sarah Martyn and James Greenwood, who plays vampire-through-the-ages Madeline Astarte, a role Busch created for himself.

"[Busch] wrote all these dream roles to showcase himself as a woman," says Tsitsias of the writer's gender-bending bent, adding that Suzette Araujo will be playing "a woman who is supposed to be a man — a tall,

German vampire hunter."

As a feel-good piece of fluff, Vampire Lesbians is low on substance. But audiences get high on its comic excesses, as witnessed by its seven years off-Broadway.

The set at Tallulah's is a simple gold frame and a couple of chairs. A live accompanist will provide music to connect scenes, go under monologues and punctuate jokes. "There's a 'big' Vegas-style production number. And we've added a song at the end."

As an Actor's Equity co-op effort, the comedy offers good performers a chance to show agents their stuff, and get crucial representation. "Toronto is not exactly a land of opportunity," says the slim, dark haired Tsitsias. "You have to create your own work. It's such a small circle of actors who are in constant rotation in all these shows. We're all co-producing this."

Tsitsias also has to come up with the flashy costumes ("I spent three months in Kensington Market's second hand shops!") and he also plays two parts. He's modest about being director, too. "Eighty percent of directing is casting; if you cast right, the job's almost done."

### VAMPIRE LESBIANS OF SODOM.

\$15. 8pm. Tue, Oct 16-21.

PWYC. 2:30pm & 6:30pm. Sun, Oct 21.

Tallulah's Cabaret.

12 Alexander St.

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